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# DOE NEWS

## DOE ACCELERATES GROUNDWATER CLEANUP NEAR K EAST REACTOR

The U.S. Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office is accelerating groundwater cleanup efforts near Hanford's K East Reactor building, adjacent to the Columbia River. The work is being funded as part of a \$10 million fiscal year 2008 congressional plus up to speed cleanup along the Columbia River Corridor. The plus-up funds are also being used to cleanup additional burial grounds near Hanford's reactor areas.

"Accelerating this work emphasizes our commitment to cleanup and directly supports our goal to stop key contaminants from reaching the Columbia River," said Briant Charboneau, Federal Project Director for Groundwater Remediation. "We're using this opportunity to step up our activities and bring us closer to our groundwater remediation goal."

Earlier this year, DOE RL directed contractor Fluor Hanford to accelerate the expansion of a new groundwater pump-and-treat system being built near the K Reactors. The system is designed to clean up one of the largest plumes of hexavalent chromium in the groundwater on the Hanford Site. Most of the plume is within the Federal Drinking Water Standard but exceeds the more stringent standard for fresh water aquatic organisms.

The contamination resulted from discharges of reactor effluent into a long trench next to the Columbia River. During production years (1950s and 1960s), sodium dichromate was added to the water that cooled the reactors to prevent corrosion of the process tubes. The water was then discharged into the trench.

Construction of the pump-and-treat facility began last year and was to be phased over three years. The additional funds allow Fluor to finish construction a year earlier than originally planned, resulting in the accelerated cleanup of the area. The treatment system will pump contaminated water from the ground and remove the chromium from the water.

“Expanding this treatment system is critical to protecting aquatic organisms on this stretch of the Columbia River,” said Bruce Ford, vice president of Groundwater & Soil Remediation, Fluor Hanford. “We’re moving quickly to drill the wells and install the equipment needed to triple the amount of groundwater we can treat—from 300 gallons per minute to 900 gallons per minute.”

“This Columbia River protection activity began in 1997 and since then many enhancements to the pump-and-treat system have occurred,” recalls Larry Gadbois, Environmental Scientist with the EPA. “This is a dramatic increase in the treatment system which will better protect the river and speed us toward completing the cleanup of this part of Hanford’s groundwater.”

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